

In this briefing sheet, detail is provided on the goals and objectives for KA2 Strategic Partnerships, confirming field-specific priorities for education and training and providing examples of the different project types.

Strategic Partnerships: Introduction

Strategic Partnerships aim to support the development, transfer and/or implementation of innovative practices as well as the implementation of joint initiatives that centre on cooperation, peer learning and exchanges of experience at European level.

Depending on the objectives and composition of the Strategic Partnership, projects can be of two types:

- **Strategic Partnerships supporting Innovation:** targeting the development of innovative outputs alongside intensive dissemination and exploitation actions associated with new/existing products and innovative ideas; applicants can request dedicated funding for Intellectual Outputs and Multiplier Events, with each tied to the targeted innovation;
- **Strategic Partnerships supporting Exchange of Good Practices:** targeting those wishing to develop or reinforce networks, to increase their capacity to operate at transnational level, and to share and discuss ideas, practices and methods; such projects might also produce tangible outputs and are equally expected to disseminate the results of their activities - in a manner proportional to the aim and scope of the project - yet without access to funding for Intellectual Outputs and Multiplier Events.

From 2018, there are **two new formats** of Strategic Partnership which support the Exchange of Good Practices:

- **School Exchange Partnerships:** only schools can participate in this type of Strategic Partnership, which aims to help the participating schools to develop as organisations and to increase their ability to work internationally and with goals that centre on organising learning and training mobility which promotes the values of tolerance and tolerance.
- **Transnational Youth Initiatives:** fostering the social commitment and entrepreneurial spirit of young people this action is specific to the field of youth and targets initiatives that are set-up and carried out by young people [*note: activities in the field of Youth are not directly addressed in this, or any, briefing sheet*].

In Table 1, an overview is provided of the different types and formats of Strategic Partnerships that can be proposed aligning these with the different fields of education, training and youth.



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Table 1: Overview of the Different Types and Formats of KA2 Strategic Partnership (by field)

Field	Types and Formats of Strategic Partnership that can be Accessed
Adult Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation • Strategic Partnership support Exchange of Good Practices
Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation
School Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation • Strategic Partnership support Exchange of Good Practices • School Exchange Partnerships: new for 2018
Vocational Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation • Strategic Partnership support Exchange of Good Practices
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation • Strategic Partnership support Exchange of Good Practices • Transnational Youth Initiatives: new for 2018

Except for School Exchange Partnerships (for which participation is limited to schools only), Strategic Partnerships are open to any type of organisation active in any field of education, training and youth or other socio-economic sectors as well as to organisations carrying out activities that are transversal to different fields (e.g. local and regional authorities, recognition and validation centres, chambers of commerce, trade organisations, guidance centres, cultural organisations).

Depending on the priority and objectives being addressed, Strategic Partnerships should involve the most **appropriate and diverse range of partners** in order to benefit from their different experiences, profiles and specific expertise and with a view to producing relevant and high-quality project results. This needs to be considered, however, in line with the **rules on participation** for different types and formats of Strategic Partnership.

To be funded, Strategic Partnerships must address **at least one horizontal or field-specific priority**, details of which are provided below.



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Horizontal Priorities

For Strategic Partnerships - irrespective of type - the following HORIZONTAL PRIORITIES exist for 2018:

- **development of relevant and high-quality skills and competences:** development of relevant and high-quality skills and competences, supporting individuals in acquiring and developing basic skills and key competences, in order to foster employability and socio-educational and personal development, as well as participation in civic and social life; includes actions to develop partnerships between learning institutions, businesses and intermediary bodies, with a view to promoting lifelong learning and improving the quality and effectiveness of learning mobility experiences; supports development and dissemination of tools for the assessment of such competences, as well as actions that apply learning outcomes-based approaches in education, training and youth activities and/or which assess their quality, impact and relevance;
- **social inclusion:** priority is given to actions that help address diversity and to promote the ownership of shared values, equality, including gender equality, and non-discrimination/social inclusion through education, training, youth and sport activities; supports projects that aim to: (a) foster the development of social, civic and intercultural competences, media literacy and critical thinking, also tackling discrimination, segregation, racism, bullying and violence; (b) enhance the access, participation and learning performance of disadvantaged learners, reducing disparities in learning outcomes; and (c) support and assess new approaches to reducing disparities in access to and engagement with digital technologies in formal and non-formal education; particular attention is given to addressing gender differences in relation to ICT;
- **open education and innovative practices in a digital era:** priority is given to actions that promote innovative methods and pedagogies, as well as participatory modes of governance, where appropriate; additional priority is given to the updating and development of digital learning materials and tools, in particular OER, open textbooks and Free and Open Source Educational Software, as well as supporting the effective use of digital technologies and open pedagogies in education, training, youth and sport; includes fostering synergies with research and innovation activities and promoting new technologies as drivers of improvements in education, training, youth and sport policies and practices; also supports new teaching methods and tools.

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Horizontal Priorities (continued)

- **educators:** priority is given to actions that strengthen recruitment/selection/induction of the best and most suitable candidates for the teaching profession as well as to actions supporting promotion of high-quality and innovative teaching in all educational sectors, training and youth work. Supports professional development of educators (teachers, professors, tutors, mentors, coaches, etc.) and youth workers, especially in dealing with early school leaving, working with learners with disadvantaged backgrounds, addressing classroom diversity, adopting new teaching methods and tools, and other contexts and work-based and informal learning;
- **transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications:** priority is given to actions that support employability as well as learning and labour mobility and which facilitates transitions between different levels and types of education/training, between education/training and work and between different jobs; priority given to actions enabling and promoting recognition as well as transparency/comparability of qualifications and learning outcomes, including through provision of better services and information/guidance on skills and qualifications; includes promoting innovative solutions for recognition and supporting validation (at local, regional, national or European/international levels) of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- **sustainable investment, performance and efficiency:** priority is given to actions supporting effective implementation of the *Investment Plan for Europe*, including by promoting funding models attracting private actors and capital (including via the Erasmus+ Student Loan Guarantee Facility), as well as supporting the design of evidence-based reforms that deliver quality, innovation and relevance in education, training, youth and sport systems and policies; priority is given to actions supporting the development of innovative ways to ensure sustainable investment in all forms of learning, both formal and non-formal, including performance-based funding and cost-sharing;
- **social and educational value of European cultural heritage and its contribution to job creation, economic growth and social cohesion:** in the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, priority is given to actions raising awareness of the importance of Europe's cultural heritage through education, lifelong learning, informal and non-formal learning, youth as well as sport, including actions to support skills development, social inclusion, critical thinking and youth engagement; supports new participatory and intercultural approaches to heritage, as well as educational initiatives aimed at fostering intercultural dialogue involving teachers and pupils from an early age.

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Field-specific Priorities: Adult Education

In the field of Adult Education, priority will be given to:

- **improving and extending the supply of high quality learning opportunities tailored to the needs of individual low-skilled or low-qualified adults** so that they enhance their literacy, numeracy and digital competences, key competences and/or progress towards higher qualifications, including through the validation of skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning, or progress towards higher qualifications;
- **facilitating access to upskilling pathways** by making available skills identification and screening, learning offers adapted to individual learning needs, and through the validation of skills acquired through informal and non-formal learning;
- **increasing demand and take-up through effective outreach, guidance and motivation strategies** which encourage low-skilled or low-qualified adults, to develop and upgrade their literacy, numeracy and digital competences and skills and/or progress towards higher qualifications;
- **extending and developing educators' competences**, particularly in the effective teaching of literacy, numeracy and digital skills to low-skilled or low-qualified adults, including through the effective use of ICT;
- **developing mechanisms to monitor the effectiveness of adult learning policies** or to track and monitor the progress of adult learners.

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Field-specific Priorities: Higher Education

In line with the challenges identified in the renewed EU Agenda for the Modernisation of HE, priority will be given to:

- **tackling skills gaps and mismatches** through: a) activities to increase the uptake of subjects where skills shortages exist and improve career guidance, and b) designing and developing curricula that meet the learning needs of students that are relevant to the labour market and societal needs, including through better use of open and online, blended, work-based, multi-disciplinary learning and new assessment models; reinforcing cooperation between higher education institutions, VET organisations and employers or social enterprises on real-world problems, for example by fostering collaboration between students, apprentices and enterprises on entrepreneurial and trans-disciplinary projects and by facilitating business field trips;
- **supporting the further development of graduate tracking systems** in Programme countries and exploring options for improving the availability of comparable data on graduate outcomes within Europe;
- **encouraging training and exchange to enhance the quality of teaching**, in particular, supporting the use of digital technologies and online delivery to improve pedagogies and assessment methods; setting up transnational teacher training courses and strengthening cooperation between teacher training centres;
- **promoting and rewarding excellence in teaching and skills development**, including through developing effective incentive structures and human resources policies at national and institutional levels, training of academics in new and innovative pedagogical approaches, new curriculum design approaches and sharing of good practices through collaborative platforms;
- **building inclusive higher education systems**, connected to surrounding communities, by: a) developing and implementing holistic institutional strategies for inclusion and study success, increasing fairness in access and the participation and completion rates of under-represented and disadvantaged groups, including through relevant post-entry support, guidance, counselling and mentoring of students; b) improving pathways between schools, VET, research institutes and higher education through multi-sector international educational partnerships; c) developing, testing and implementing flexible and modular course design (part-time, online or blended) in particular to better adapt to the needs of mature students and early stage researchers; d) promoting the civic and social responsibility of students, researchers and universities and recognising voluntary and community work in academic results (through ECTS points, for example);

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Field-specific Priorities: Higher Education (continued)

- ensuring higher education institutions and research institutes contribute to innovation by: a) developing, implementing and testing the effectiveness of approaches to promote creativity, entrepreneurial thinking and skills for applying innovative ideas in practice; b) ensuring education and research are mutually reinforcing, including through partnerships and inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches, and through strengthening the role of higher education institutions and research institutes in their local and regional environments; c) supporting the transfer of latest research outputs back into education as input for teaching and encouraging undergraduates and master students to get involved in opportunities to help them explore contemporary research problems and develop their research skills to become a researcher;
- fostering effective and efficient system-level funding and governance models, rewarding good teaching, innovation and community-relevance;
- promoting internationalisation, recognition and mobility, supporting changes in line with Bologna principles and tools; cooperation projects of universities, research institutes, university networks and possibly private or non-profit actors to implement mobility activities under the Erasmus+ Student Loan Guarantee Facility may be considered.

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Field-specific Priorities: School Education

In the field of school education, priority will be given to:

- **strengthening the profile(s) of the teaching professions**, including teachers, school leaders and teacher educators, through actions with the following objectives: making careers more attractive; strengthening selection and recruitment; enhancing teachers' professional development and linking its different phases in a continuum from Initial Teacher Education and induction to continuing professional development; supporting teachers in dealing with diversity in the classroom (including pupils with a migrant background); supporting teachers in adopting collaborative and innovative practices, both digital and non-digital, and new assessment methods; strengthening leadership in education, including the role and profile of school leaders, distributed leadership at school and teacher leadership;
- **promoting the acquisition of skills and key competences**, for example by: addressing underachievement in maths, science and literacy through effective and innovative teaching and assessment; promoting entrepreneurship education; mainstreaming digital competence provision across the curricula, tailored to specific age groups; fostering critical thinking especially through teaching science in environmental and/or cultural context; adopting a holistic approach to language teaching and learning, building on the diversity found in today's increasingly multilingual classrooms;
- **supporting schools to tackle early school leaving (ESL) and disadvantage** and to offer quality education, enabling success for all students, from the lowest to the highest end of the academic spectrum, including children with a migrant background who might face specific (e.g. linguistic) challenges; strengthening collaboration among all actors within schools, as well as with families, and other external stakeholders; improving transition between different stages of education; supporting networking by schools which promote collaborative and holistic approaches to teaching and learning; improving evaluation and quality assurance;
- **supporting efforts to increase access to affordable and high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC)**; enhancing the quality of ECEC systems and provisions in order to foster age appropriate development of children, to achieve better learning outcomes and ensure a good start in education for all, in particular through taking the EU ECEC quality framework further, as well as ensuring that the benefits of early childhood education are carried through to other school education levels, and projects that develop new models of implementation, governance and funding for ECEC.

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Field-specific Priorities: Vocational Education & Training

In the field of Vocational Education and Training, priority will be given to:

- **developing institutional partnerships** supporting the set up and implementation of an internationalisation strategy of VET learners and apprentices, aimed at putting in place the necessary support infrastructure as well as the relevant institutional and/or contractual frameworks to promote quality mobility work placements of VET learners and apprentices in another country. The specific rules and information relating to VET learner mobility activities, as described in Annex I of the Programme guide, should be applied;
- **developing partnerships aimed at promoting work-based learning in all its forms**, e.g. the development of new training content (including joint VET qualifications), integrating periods of work-based learning, including opportunities to apply knowledge in practical projects/real-life workplace situations, and embedding international experience (mobility) whenever possible;
- in view of increasing the quality of VET provision, **the establishment of feedback loops to adapt VET provision based on outcomes**, including by setting up or testing graduate tracking arrangements as part of quality assurance systems in line with the recommendation on the European Framework for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET);
- **further strengthening key competences in initial and continuing VET** (especially literacy, numeracy and digital) including common methodologies for introducing those competences in curricula, as well as for acquiring, delivering and assessing the learning outcomes of those curricula; enhancing access to training and qualifications for all, with a particular attention to the low-skilled, through continuing VET, notably by increasing quality, supply and accessibility of continuing VET, validation of non-formal and informal learning, promoting work-place learning, providing for efficient and integrated guidance services and flexible and permeable learning pathways;
- introducing systematic approaches to, and opportunities for, the **initial and continuous professional development of VET teachers, trainers and mentors** in both school and work-based settings, with a focus on developing effective digital, open and innovative education and pedagogies.

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Examples of Strategic Partnerships in the field of Adult Education

[example of a Strategic Partnership supporting Exchange of Good Practices]

Enhancing Retirement Planning [Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation]

Cognisant of the fact that increased life expectancy, in many industrialised countries, will lead to a longer period of retirement, partners from 3 European countries target improved preparation for those about to enter this “third age”. Having confirmed the state-of-play in the participating countries, specifically the expectations of those about to enter retirement, partners will focus their attention towards the development of a series of common guidelines for use by those working to support retirement planning. In this respect, primary target audiences are vast and include employers, unions, professional associations, and local and regional authorities, among others. Developed guidelines will be piloted with end users in each of the partner countries and, ultimately, centre on improving pre-retirement planning and course delivery within and beyond the participating institutions and countries. Project partners are all affiliated with the University of the Third Age (U3A), providing a vehicle for wider dissemination and exploitation.

[example of a Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation]

Professionalising Adult Education [Strategic Partnership supporting Exchange of Good Practices]

The ultimate goal of this strategic partnership is the professionalisation and modernisation of adult education. Bringing together partners from 5 European countries, adult education staff will be encouraged to consider a new philosophy which extends their role to that of adult educator, researcher and learning facilitator. In the first instance, partners will pilot this staff development action with unemployed women looking to develop basic skills with a view to successfully entering the labour market, In the longer-term, the developed model and approach expects to be able to be used with wider target audiences in the adult education sector.

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Example of a Strategic Partnership in the field of Higher Education

[example of a Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation]

Modernising Music Education

Recognising difficulties faced by qualified musicians in accessing relevant employment, and aware of the often-excessive numbers of applicants applying for a limited number of posts in the music industry, partners from 4 European countries are working together with a view to modernising existing higher education curricula, and related teaching and learning approaches, in the field of music education (Masters-level). Actions centre on creative and collaborative learning, and the use of mentoring and practice-based research. Delivery will additionally involve student and staff mobility and will centre on the hosting of two intensive study programmes and two staff development courses. Participating staff will be further encouraged to contribute to a platform for professional integration, entrepreneurship and collaborative (cross-arts) practice. Student beneficiaries, and future graduates, can expect to benefit from increased employment options, as skilled yet flexible musicians, and from improved leadership and entrepreneurship skills. End project results will take the form of updated curricula to be delivered by participating institutions and wider partners, including internationally.

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Example of a Strategic Partnership in the field of Vocational Education & Training

[example of a Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation]

Targeted Learning for Automation, Truck Maintenance and Welding

Partners from 7 European countries project come together in a strategic partnership centred on enhancing the quality and attractiveness of VET through promoting the use of ECVET principles in a European (rather than national) classroom setting. Building on past successes, extending these to new countries and new sectors, units of learning outcomes will be developed for automation, truck maintenance and welding programmes. Newly-participating partners will directly involve learner cohorts with a view to testing the relevance, usefulness and ease of delivery of the developed units (of learning outcomes) and will seek feedback from learner participants with a view to improving the end project results. In the longer-term, the developed units will facilitate the cross-border delivery of occupationally-relevant learning outcomes and might easily be used in the delivery of future VET mobility programmes for individual learners.

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Example of Strategic Partnerships in the field of School Education

[example of a Strategic Partnership supporting Innovation]

Tackling Early School Leaving: Targeting Change for Pupils and Teachers

This larger-scale strategic partnership brings together different organisations working within and beyond the school education sector. Ultimate beneficiaries are pupils with low levels of basic skills and perceived to be at risk of early school leaving. Initial targets for the project are teaching staff in the four participating European countries, working in different learning environments, with activities centred on: the development and delivery of in-service training for the delivery of pupil guidance and retention strategies; the production of guidelines and case studies; and, the creation of a digital open access platform to encourage professional discussion and knowledge sharing among teachers and other educational practitioners. The online platform will additionally support promotion and will be used alongside existing partner networks to market the end project results.

[example of a School Exchange Partnership: a new type of Strategic Partnership for 2018]

School Exchanges based on a Shared Labour Market Challenge

Schools from five different remote communities, in Europe, work together with a view to considering how to better prepare their pupils for the needs and expectations of a changing labour market. Each of the five communities will share its own experiences of a labour market affected by industrial change, urbanisation, and worker migration. Pupils will be encouraged to consider what their own region has to offer, in terms of sustainable employment, making career ambitions more relevant to today's labour market. International collaboration will centre on a series of short-term pupil exchanges, one to each of the partner schools, through which students will be able to see how different communities have reacted to similar labour market challenges. Pupils will undertake project-based learning, with their peers in other countries, and will also collaborate with representatives of local industry. Teachers will additionally benefit through participating in round table short-term joint staff training events, in which round-table discussions will be held, with teaching professionals from other schools and countries, with a view to sharing knowledge, experience and good practice.

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